cooperation between Turkey, Israel and India for transportation of crude oil from the Caspian region through the Mediterranean and Red Sea and into India. Briefly, this project envisages transport of crude oil from Ceyhan port in Turkey to Ashkelon port in Israel in the Mediterranean Sea, initially through Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCCs) and eventually by laying a sub-sea pipeline. Thereafter, crude oil will be transported through the existing Ashkelon -Eilat pipeline in Israel to Eilat port on the Red Sea. From there, crude oil may be carried to India/other parts of Asia. The project is still in a conceptual stage and requires a detailed feasibility study to establish its techno-commercial viability. A tripartite meeting between Turkey-Israel-India was held in September 2008 at Ankara to discuss conceptual features of the project.

(c) to (e) Since the project is still in the conceptual stage, the cost of such oil can not be determined at this juncture. Our import of crude oil from various sources is decided after due consideration of its overall economics, taking into account particularly factors such as crude oil's technical suitability, price, transportation cost, yield and sustained availability. At present, bulk of India's crude oil is imported from the countries in the Middle East, namely, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, UAE and Kuwait. Crude oil is also imported in significant quantities from Nigeria, Malaysia and Angola. During the last 3 years, import of some crude oil from the Caspian Sea region, particularly Azerbaijan, has also been made.

Aviation scene in Bihar

*24. SHRI RAJNITI PRASAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of expansion of infrastructure-facilities at Patna and Gaya airport;

(b) how many more airports have been planned for Bihar;

(c) the present status of their executions; and

(d) whether Government would consider expanding infrastructural facilities and providing more air connectivity with different countries of the world in view of tourist influx in Gaya?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Patna: Patna Airport is a customs airport and has Runway 07/25 with usable length of 6330 ft. suitable for operation of A-320 type of aircraft with load restrictions. The existing Terminal Building is suitable for handling 300 passengers at a time with required facilities for handling Domestic and limited International flights.

AAI have a plan for extension of Runway, expansion or construction of new Terminal Building, construction of Apron etc. at this airport subject to availability of land by the Govt. of Bihar along with removal of obstruction in the approach paths of Runway.

Gaya: Gaya Airport has Runway Length of 7500 ft suitable for A-320 operations. Terminal Building is suitable for handling Domestic and limited International flights with capacity of 500 peak hour passengers.

AAI have a plan for extending the Runway to 9000 ft. with Category I Approach lights for operation of wide bodied aircraft in low visibility conditions. The additional land of 100 acres required for this purpose, has been projected to Government of Bihar.

(b) Presently, no proposal for construction of any new airport in the State of Bihar has been firmed up.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Once additional land of 100 acres is provided by Government of Bihar, it will enable AAI to expand the Runway to 9000 ft. making the airport suitable for wide-bodied Medium Capacity Long Range aircraft being commonly used for International Flights. Gaya is available as a point of call for international operation which can be granted on the request of foreign airlines. At present, Air India, Druk Air and Thai Airways operate international flights from Gaya. Further, actual operations are decided by airlines as per their commercial judgement.

Competition among oil companies

†*25.SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the decision of reducing the prices of petrol and diesel has been left on open market;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the open market pricing policy would increase the competition among various oil companies; and

(d) if so, the policy formulated to regulate the competition among these oil companies?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The open market pricing policy, if introduced, would increase the competition among various oil companies.

(d) Does not arise.

Problems faced by corporate houses

*26. SHRI SABIR ALI: Will the Minister of CORPORATE AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of problems pointed out and suggestions made by corporate houses during the last two years and the current year;

(b) the steps taken to solve these problems;

(c) the details of problems solved and those yet to be solved; and

(d) by when these problems would be solved?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi